



Photo by S.-I. UÉNO
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In Memoriam Kintaro BABA

(28 Jun. 1912 – 6 Jan. 1993)

All the Japanese coleopterists, both professionals and amateurs, will miss Kintaro BABA's humorous speeches and words of encouragement. Kinataro BABA, a medical doctor, Honorary Member of the Japanese Society of Coleopterology, and the owner of Kurokawa Hospital in Niigata Prefecture, passed away suddenly from cerebral infarction on January 6, 1993, at the age of 80. He suffered from angina pectoris for some years, but none of us were anxious about his cerebral condition.

Dr. BABA was born at Haraoka of Tomiura-machi, Chiba Prefecture, on June 28, 1912, as a son of the SAKAIS, and was adopted into the BABAS when he was a grammar school boy. He grew up at Kurokawa in Niigata Prefecture, and though he hoped to become an entomologist, he attended Niigata Medical College, meeting the wishes of his adoptive family. He became a medical doctor in 1939, and received his M. D. degree in 1947. As the superintendent of Kurokawa Hospital, he resumed his studies on entomology, working on the biology of ant lions and dragonflies at first, and extending his interest to all the groups of insects. At this stage, one of his most noted

works on beetles was that on *Damaster*. He made careful collectings in Niigata Prefecture including the Islands of Sado and Awa-shima, supplying innumerable specimens to many specialists, whose papers furnished reliable sources of information on the insect fauna of that part of Japan.

It is worth noting that Dr. BABA is the discoverer of the upper hypogean fauna. In the winter of 1965, he happened to collect a specimen of an anophthalmic trechine beetle from under a stone lying at the side of a path on a deforested hill. Searching for its original habitat, he dug in the ground to the underlying rock and finally located it at a depth of about 2 m. He found that the beetle normally dwelt in narrow fissures of shale under a thick soil layer, a peculiar habitat which had never been looked for by previous entomologists. At that time, however, the Japanese biospeleology was not yet mature enough to appreciate the full meaning of this important discovery, and some ten years more were needed for the wide recognition that the habitats of this kind, now called the upper hypogean zone, are the place originally inhabited by the so-called terrestrial cave animals.

In the sixties and seventies, Dr. BABA made collecting trips all over Japan, and in the eighties, he concentrated his energies on clarification of the insect fauna of Taiwan. At the same time, he warmly encouraged young entomologists and supported their studies in various ways. He also patronized entomological societies and associations including ours, and often rescued them from financial collapse. In doing so, he wanted to realize the dream of his youth to become a great entomologist and to create a paradise for insect lovers.

Dr. BABA's devotion to the Japanese entomology will continue to inspire those who knew him, who love insects and who wish for a bright future of the Japanese entomology.

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